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You are earnestly asked to hand this,
after reading, to some other person who
will also give it careful consideration.

The Philippine Policy

OF

SECRETARY TAFT

ANALYZED BY

MOORFIELD STOREY

(SECOND EDITION)

ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE

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Secretary Taft's Philippine Argument.

EXAMINED BY MOORFIELD STOREY.

I.

It is natural that the words of Secretary Taft in regard to the Philippine Islands should carry great weight with his countrymen. He speaks with an authority derived from his reputation as a judge, his experience as a governor of the islands, and his personal character. He speaks also with an evident conviction that he is right, while he presents the view which every American would like to adopt, that the course of this country from the beginning has been wise, unselfish and morally justified. If he is right he will welcome discussion, which must help every just cause, and if he is wrong it is important that his error should be shown, that public opinion may be directed wisely. Though his position has been attacked with great force, there still remains much to say, and this must excuse another contribution to the discussion.

It is pleasant at the outset to agree with his fundamental proposition that our policy should rest on the principle "The Philippines for the Filipinos." The question is what that principle requires us to do. His position on that question may best be given in his own words.

His first contention is thus stated in his speech on April 21 before the Chamber of Commerce in New York, when Mr. Taft said:

"The people of the United States have under their guidance and control in the Philippines an archipelago of 3,000 islands, the population of which is about 7,600,000 souls. Of these 7,000,000 are Christians and 600,000 are Moros or other pagan tribes."

In the Outlook of April 30, in speaking of the question, "When independence can be safely extended to the Filipinos," he says:

"We may very much better rely on the good sense and virtue of the American people rightfully to solve the problem when it arises, than to treat them as if they were not to be trusted justly to decide a question because some of them may acquire a pecuniary interest in the islands. I have an abiding confidence in the power of the American people to reach a right conclusion and put in into effect against the selfish purposes of special interests."

To put it briefly, Mr. Taft insists that upon the American people rests the duty of solving the Philippine problem, and he asserts that they are able to do it.

The object of his policy is thus stated in his speech to the New York Chamber of Commerce:

"As a friend of the Filipinos, it is my anxious desire to enlarge that class of Americans who have a real interest in the welfare of the islands, and who believe that the United States can have no higher duty or function than to assist the people of the islands to prosperity and a political development which shall enable them to secure to themselves the enjoyment of civil liberty."

He is careful, however, to point out that "civil liberty" does not mean political liberty, far less independence. In the same speech he says that the United States

"has secured to every man, woman and child among the Christian Filipinos all the rights contained in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the United States, except the right to bear arms and the right to trial by jury."

He proceeds:

"All the substantial civil rights then are secured to the Philippine people: They do not themselves exercise complete political control, but that is a very different thing from civil liberty."

In the Outlook he emphasizes the distinction, saying that the

"self-styled anti-imperialist . . . fails to distinguish between individual civil liberty and political control. . .

“The electoral franchise is not necessary to the enjoyment of civil liberty, and yet there are few of the opponents of the policy of the administration in the Philippines who recognize the distinction,” and says, “What we are doing is to teach the Filipino individual liberty.”

The method of attaining this object is thus stated in the speech to the Chamber of Commerce:

“The first requisite of prosperity in the Philippine islands is tranquillity, and this should be evidenced by a well-ordered government. The Filipinos must be taught the advantage of such a government, and they should learn from the government which is given them the disadvantages that arise to everybody in the country from political agitation for a change in the form of government in the immediate future. . . . Why not take the broader policy, which is that of doing everything beneficial to the Philippine islands, of giving them a full market, of offering them an opportunity to have railroads built extensively through the islands, and of having a tranquillity which is essential to the development of their business and their property; why not insist on the spread of the educational system, of an improvement in the health laws, and subject everything that is done in the islands to an examination as to whether it is beneficial to the Filipino people, and then when all has been done for the Philippines that a government can do, and they have been elevated and taught the dignity of labor, the wisdom of civil liberty and self-restraint in the political control indispensable to the enjoyment of civil liberty, when they have learned the principles of successful popular government from a gradually enlarged experience therein, we can discuss the question whether independence is what they desire, and grant it, or the retention of a closer association with the country which, by its guidance, has unselfishly led them on to better conditions.”

His view as to the time required may be gathered from his article in the Outlook:

“It may be that when the Filipinos have been transformed into a people capable of safely maintaining an independent self-government, they will ask it, and then I have

no doubt that it will be accorded them.

"It may be, however, and that I think quite as likely, that by that time the Filipinos will be so well satisfied with the good resulting from a union with the United States that they will prefer to maintain a relation like that which now binds Australia and Canada to Great Britain, and that the United States, on the other hand, will then value its association with this pearl of the Oriental tropics. But whatever the ultimate decision, it is certain that the time for decision cannot arise for a considerable period, probably several generations."

The idea that the United States will meanwhile learn to value the islands is amplified in the New York speech, where he says:

"It is estimated that not more than 5,000,000 acres of land are owned by natives in the islands, and that the remainder, 65,000,000, is owned by the government;" that this will be opened for settlement and will probably "be taken up by both Filipinos and Americans," that the maximum limitation for purchase of a company, 2,500 acres, "is much too low for the cultivation of sugar," that "there is a provision in the law by which irrigation companies may own a stock in land companies, so that probably the limitation may be evaded if private profit requires," and finally adds, "it so happens, and it fortunately so happens, that generally everything we do for the benefit of the Filipinos and the Philippines will only make their association with the United States more profitable to the United States."

The limitation as to the number of acres which a company may buy was intended to prevent a few Americans from monopolizing the land, and a suggestion that it may be evaded, if such evasion pays, comes with a singular infelicity from the officer who is charged with the duty of enforcing the law.

He insists that no promise of ultimate independence should now be made because

"a promise to give ultimate independence will be construed by the more violent element, disposed to agitation, to be a promise to grant independence in the near future and during the present generation." . . . "They would

be certain to use the promise as a basis for immediate agitation." . . . While "the hope of success in our work in the Philippines is tranquillity of the public mind and a condition of public attention in which the conservative, peaceful and educated members of the community are able to give their best efforts and sympathy to the existing government in its efforts to secure a real benefit to the people." . . . "The success of the experiment we are making in the Philippines depends on having the Filipinos understand that we are there for their benefit, but that we expect to stay there indefinitely in working out the good we propose to do them."

It is not surprising that Mr. Taft concludes that

"to make the terms of the Declaration of Independence apply equally to the Filipinos as to the American colonists is to be blind to the plainest facts and to sacrifice truth to an impossible dogma and a rhetorical phrase."

This is Secretary Taft's policy as he has presented it. More briefly stated, it is in substance this: The American people, a self-sacrificing and conscientious nation, having no object in view save the benefit of the Filipinos, should retain the absolute control of the Philippines indefinitely, and at least for several generations, meanwhile introducing education, railroads, sanitary improvement and other good things, until the Filipinos are fit for independence, and then the American people should decide whether they are fit for independence and also whether independence is good for them. During this period the Americans are to acquire larger and larger interests in the islands, and the Filipinos are to enjoy such civil rights as Congress may grant them, but the question of their independence must not be discussed either in the Philippines or the United States.

Proceeding now to consider this policy, we may ask in the first place whether Secretary Taft really believes in "the good sense and virtue of the American people" as thoroughly as he asserts, and if so, in which part of the American people these qualities reside.

Not in those who now live in the islands, for he told the Chamber of Commerce that

"the American merchants" there "easily caught the feeling of hostility and contempt felt by many of the soldiers

for the Filipinos, and were most emphatic in condemning the policy of the government in attempting to attract the Filipinos and make them so far as might be a part of the new civil order.

"The American newspapers which were established readily took the tone of their advertisers and their subscribers, and hence it is that the American community in the Philippines today is largely an anti-Filipino community," prone apparently in dealing with the natives "to call them names, to make fun of them, and to deprive every effort toward their advancement and development." He added with reason, "This is unfortunate and there must come into the islands a new set of merchants who shall view the situation from an entirely different standpoint."

One is tempted to ask in passing how likely Americans are to settle in these islands since the Supreme Court has decided that they lose their constitutional rights when they go there, and may be convicted of crime, not by a jury, but by the majority of a court consisting of four Americans and three Filipinos.

It is perhaps permissible to add in confirmation of Secretary Taft's statement a few passages from the letters of Denzil H. Taylor. This young man, brought up in New Hampshire, and graduating at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1899, went to the Philippines in 1901, and was made one of the provincial board which governed the province of Ilocos Norte in Luzon, where he held the place of provincial supervisor with high praise from his associates until he died at his post. On May 12, 1902, he wrote:

"I have a few words to say about teachers. Of course, there are many good and faithful ones to whom nothing but praise should be given, but of the majority, at least as far as this province is concerned, this must be said: Never before have such a number of incapables and cranks been deported from any country as were sent here as teachers. They are here simply for what they can get out of it—have neither principles nor morals. They domineer over and oppress the natives. Three in the province—two of them Harvard graduates—we have been obliged to take arms from, as being unfit to use firearms. They would enter towns in the dead of night and fire right and left to

frighten the natives.”

In another letter he said:

“As to morals and right living, what sort of an example are many of our soldiers, our officers, and even our school-teachers setting to the to-be-uplifted brother? Many a man when he leaves America seems to leave behind all ideas of right living—anything and everything is allowable.”

That these conditions still exist may be gathered from the letter of Mr. Leupp to the New York Evening Post of June 11, it being remembered that the writer is a strong friend of the president. I quote:

“That these wishes of the American element are making some disturbance continues clear. A well-known traveling newspaper correspondent, who writes from anything but an anti-imperialistic point of view, has devoted considerable attention to these complaints in his letters from Manila. He says: ‘These men are the loudest and most bitter in their criticisms of the conduct of affairs. They disapprove most vigorously the friendly attitude of our government toward the natives, and denounce the policy of ‘benevolent assimilation’ as preposterous and visionary. They complain because Judge Taft and his associates have shown so much solicitude for the welfare of the natives and so little for the American residents. They object to the appointment of so many Filipinos to office, and instead of cultivating the good will of the native population, and creating a demand for American goods, they spend their time and energy finding fault and making gloomy predictions.

“The people here described have sent some emissaries to Washington to convince the authorities that things are all wrong in the Philippines, that the iron hand of white supremacy should replace the Taft policy of the ‘Philippines for the Filipinos.’ What they call a chamber of commerce in Manila is really an organization for bringing about conditions more favorable to the exploitation of the islands, without reference to the welfare of the natives. The admission of Chinese labor is the first thing the chamber of commerce wants in this program.

“The relations between the ‘American element’ there and the Filipinos are mostly seriously strained; the news-

papers which cater to it never say a word for the Filipinos, nor, for that matter, of the civil government. The despicable 'little brown brother' poem has been widely circulated. It is about as true a picture of the Filipinos as 'The Leopard's Spots' is of the negro in American. No one can read its fierce arraignment of the natives and learn that it is almost a national hymn with our soldiers here, and then imagine that relations between the two races are very cordial."

Secretary Taft is clearly right in thinking that little is to be expected from the Americans now in the islands toward the solution of our problem,

How is it with the Americans at home? Does he really think that they can be trusted "rightfully to solve the problem when it arises?" Is he willing to let them decide even the preliminary question whether the problem has arisen? Apparently not, for in his speech to the Chamber of Commerce he says of the men who have signed a petition for Filipino independence and whom in the Outlook he describes as "a number of excellent and prominent gentlemen":

"Why should the good people who signed the petition intermeddle with something the effect of which they are very little able to understand?"

Who are these men whose ability to understand the Philippine situation is denied? The list includes Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Farley, more than 50 bishops, more than 60 judges, many of our most prominent men in other walks of life, a long list of college presidents and leading educators, men like ex-President Cleveland, President Eliot of Harvard, President Schurman of Cornell, himself not without experience in the Philippines, ex-Senator Edmunds, Charles Francis Adams, Andrew Carnegie, Wayne MacVeagh, and thousands of others who are respected throughout the country. These men are the spiritual, the intellectual leaders of the American people. If these men are "little able to understand," where in our broad land are we to look for intelligence? If such American leaders must not "intermeddle," what reason have we to share Secretary Taft's "abiding confidence in the power of the American people to reach a right conclusion?" When he says that "the people of the United States have under their guidance and control these islands," why does he tell

them, when they try to guide, that they are intermeddling with what they are unable to understand?

The government of the Philippines by the American people upon this theory is to be a government not only without the consent of the governed, but without the consent of the governors. Does not Secretary Taft see that he must concede to ex-Senator Edmunds, President Schurman, and men like these, the ability to understand the Philippine situation, or else admit that there are no Americans who have this ability, unless indeed he claims peculiar intellectual gifts for himself and his late associates on the commission?

If the American people lack the needed ability in this generation, is it not a violent assumption that their sons and grandsons will be more able and more intelligent? If the Americans of today are unfit to deal with the problem, must the Philippines remain in the hands of people unable to understand their needs, until a new and wiser American people has supplanted the present generation? This is not a comforting hypothesis either for Americans or Filipinos.

Surely if the bad Americans on the islands and the good Americans at home are alike not to be trusted, no one is left, unless by American people we are to understand only the President and his appointees, the Secretary of War and the Philippine commission.

If Secretary Taft is right, we must have not only "a new set of merchants" in the islands, but a new generation of Americans at home before the American people can think of governing. Meanwhile the fate of some 8,000,000 of Asiatics hangs upon the life and health of the half-dozen Americans who alone have the ability to understand their needs, unless indeed there is a sacramental virtue in an appointment to the Philippine Commission, which gives the men who receive it an ability denied to Cardinal Gibbons, President Eliot, Andrew Carnegie, and their associates. Is it not perfectly apparent that Secretary Taft means that the American people should not deal with the Philippine problem, but that it should be left wholly in the hands of the President and such men as he may appoint to govern the islands?

Let us go a little further. Why are leading Americans "little able to understand" the effect of their action? Is it because the truth as to the situation in the Philippine Islands has not been told them? If not, who is responsible? We

remember the censorship. We cannot forget that Secretary Taft himself in his testimony before Senator Lodge's committee gave us no idea of the extent to which torture, destruction and reconcentration had been carried in the attempt to conquer the Filipinos. We remember that Major Gardener's damaging report as governor of a province was withheld, and we recall Secretary Taft's explanation of the withholding. We have not forgotten that steps were taken to have Major Gardener testify before the committee, when it was discovered that a court of inquiry must be held in the Philippines, and that he must remain there to meet it. Why has the report of that court never been printed?²³

It is within a year that E. B. Bryan, the general superintendent of education issued to teachers in the Philippines a circular beginning:

"Because of our great distance from the States and the prevailing conditions here being different from conditions there, it is very difficult for home people to correctly understand many things that we may be disposed to say to them in letters. They get a wrong impression. . . . Teachers are requested to exercise such care as the situation demands, both in their statements and by special direction to correspondents, that all private communications shall be treated as such. Any misuse of matter sent to the States will be treated as if authorized by the party sending it."

Here again we have the same distrust of the American intelligence. The teachers employed to instruct the Filipinos in a language which they do not understand must not write in their own language to their friends at home about what they see and hear in the islands. Have we any reason to think that the American people have ever been told the whole truth?

We are given to understand that everything in the Philippines is pleasant and peaceful. Why should teachers be forbidden to tell us all they see? The difficulty is said to be in the lack of intelligence here. What has happened to our people that makes them so dull on this subject alone?†

Secretary Taft's administration, the whole policy of his

* See Appendix A

† See Appendix B

party, was on trial when he spoke, and is still on trial. Would he claim even for himself immunity from the human temptation to put the best face possible upon the matter, and not to bring forth all the facts which might provoke hostile criticism? If he is so above temptation, are there many like him?

Or does Secretary Taft mean that the people of America are so immersed in their own affairs, so busy, so indifferent that even their most intelligent men have not given the necessary time to understand the Philippine situation? If this is true—if during the last five years, when our new departure has excited universal interest and the whole question was new, such men as President Eliot and Wayne MacVeagh, and others like them, have not had the time or taken interest enough in the subject to form an intelligent opinion on the question whether the Philippines should be promised independence, where can we hope to find men who will take the necessary interest, and when will they have time enough to study the subject? Will it only be when the American people agree with Secretary Taft that he will show “the abiding confidence” which he professes in the power of the American people to reach a right conclusion and put it into effect?

If this is Mr. Taft’s view, it is confirmed by the Hartford Courant, a strong Republican journal, which thus describes the attitude of its constituents:—

“In our opinion there is not today as much interest in these people as there is in the fading American Indians. The public will never be aroused to see a live issue in the political welfare of so remote a population as those of these far-off islands. The question of their position with regard to the constitution is to the average citizen an altogether academic one. If the government is looking after them, he concerns himself no further and cannot be made to.”

If the people of Connecticut feel thus, is there reason to believe that the bulk of the American people have any more conscience or recognize more clearly the obligations imposed upon them by their “guidance and control” of the Filipinos?

Secretary Taft’s policy is founded on the assumption that the American people are, and will continue to be unselfish in their attitude toward the Filipinos, and that they can be trusted to keep men in office anxious to carry out this unselfish policy.

Does he not see that the existing situation is typical, and such as it is, it always will be?

There will always be a body of resident Americans, anxious to make money quick and looking down upon the natives, who will despise them, misinterpret them, and try to profit at their expense, just as the resident Americans are doing now. There will always be governors naturally solicitous for the success of their administration, and never willing to disclose the facts which might lead to criticism or condemnation. They will always tell the American people, as Mr. Taft tells us now, that they are "very little able to understand" the situation. There will always be the busy, good-natured American people, knowing little and caring less about their distant subjects, taking, as the *Courant* says, less "interest in these people" than "in the fading American Indians." Between the insistent force of resident Americans keenly alive to their own interests, attacking such a policy as Secretary Taft's as they attack it now, and their governors, who are likely to be recalled at their instance, there will be our people believing what Americans say because they are their own flesh and blood, and content to let the government manage the islands.

If the men who today govern the islands are honest and benevolent, where in human history does Secretary Taft find any warrant for the belief that under circumstances like these they will continue such for a hundred years and always resist American greed in behalf of Filipino rights? The American people will no more resist the selfish demands of American adventurers, or protect the Filipino against them, than they have resisted the inroads upon the Indians or protected them against spoliation, than they have protected the rights of the colored race, or than they protected the Southern States from Northern "carpet baggers." The American people will deal with the Filipinos as the English have dealt with the Boers or with the people of India, who, after centuries of English rule, are not so near independence as they were at the beginning.

If the American people can ever be trusted to settle this question, they can be trusted now. They never will be more fit than they are today, and it is as visionary to suppose that after a century they will be wiser or better than their leaders are today, as it is to believe that the Philippines will attract in the future any better Americans than those who have gone there. While the conditions of life in the United States are

what they are, our best citizens will stay here, rather than take up their abode in any region whose climate and whose conditions are such as prevail in the Philippines. In all the centuries during which England has ruled India, no Englishman has gone there to settle and make his home, and for the same reason no American will ever go to the Philippines, except as an official for a brief term, or in the hope of returning richer than he went.

Mr. Taft's first proposition is contradicted by all human experience. The American people cannot and will not govern the Filipinos, but his argument rests on the assumption that they will govern and govern benevolently. Against it I would place the immortal words of Lincoln: "No man is good enough to govern another without that other's consent." The governor, be he man or nation, sees his own side, his own interest, and is a judge in his own case whenever the governed questions his acts.

Turning to Secretary Taft's second proposition, that the government "has secured to every man, woman and child among the Christian Filipinos all the rights contained in the bill of rights in the constitution of the United States, except the right to bear arms and the right to be tried by jury," it must be assumed that he believes this.

Is it not, however, true that not one constitutional right is secured to any Filipino? Do not all these rights rest on act of Congress, which may be repealed at will?

But assuming that this is security, is the right of free speech, of a free press, of public assembly, secured to the Filipinos? May they now hold public meetings to agitate for independence? May they criticise the government at will, or does the government, through the judges of its appointment, exercise the right to punish criticism?

Are their persons and property protected against unwarrantable searches and seizures? Have not the people of a whole province been subjected to reconcentration, severe and protracted, in order that the government might catch a few men, who, by its own description, were mere robbers, with whom the people had no sympathy? Has not this been done since the proclamation of peace two years ago?

Are rights which the government may suspend at will "secured" to the people in any just sense? "Civil liberty," as the Secretary is careful to call it, can never be secured to any

people without political power to maintain it. The rights of women and children in this country are secure without political power (to take a case which the Secretary seems to consider in point), but they are all represented by men who have political power, who make and unmake the government by their votes. Their rights are protected by the strongest defense known to man, the domestic affections. If Mr. Taft proposed to give the Filipino men the suffrage, his illustration would be pertinent, but to say that the men of one nation may rule the men of another, with whom they have no real sympathy, because they rule their own wives and children, is not convincing.

Secretary Taft's whole statement about "civil liberty" means only this, that the government of the United States will give the Filipinos such privileges as it pleases and will take them away when it pleases, as may best secure the maintenance of its authority. Of rights, as we understand rights, which no Legislature and no executive can take away, they will have none, and of power to determine their own rights they will have no vestige. It is absolute government, in name by our people; in fact by the president and his officers.

To Mr. Taft's argument that our course in the Philippines is not inconsistent with the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence as interpreted by our conduct, there are two answers:—

1. The fact that in various cases our people have not lived up to their principles no more affects the principles themselves, than the persistent violation of the Ten Commandments by generations of men changes the meaning of the Commandments or proves that they are wrong; nor than the fact that the Christian nations laid waste China and murdered her people in revenge for the attack on the legations proves that revenge is a Christian practice.

2. Our most conspicuous violation of the Declaration, African slavery, cost this nation dear, and has been repented in sackcloth and ashes. We would avoid inviting a similar chastisement by a fresh offense. The same arguments which are now used to prove that the Declaration of Independence does not forbid our course in the Philippines, were then used to prove that it did not prevent slavery. Secretary Taft will find in the speeches of Stephen A. Douglas during his debate with Abraham Lincoln a fuller statement of those arguments than he has made, and he will find in the speeches of Lincoln a more

complete reply than I can make.

His policy of giving the Filipinos education, roads, railways and other good things is only benevolent despotism. For a hundred years men of an alien race are to decide what the Filipinos need and how their wants can be supplied, and by this experience they are to be trained for self-government.

Secretary Taft seems to confuse self-government with American self-government. The Declaration of Independence was exactly what its name implies, a declaration of national independence, not a declaration in favor of any form of government. It asserted the right of every people to govern themselves. It did not undertake to say how. No people in the world are governed exactly as we are, and our institutions would not suit other men. Russia is a despotism; Japan an empire with some popular features. Germany, Italy, France, England, Austria, each has its own system. Shall we say that Russia ought not to be independent, because all that Secretary Taft says of the Filipinos may with equal truth be said of the Russians? The Filipinos are entitled to decide for themselves what form of government they prefer, and which is best suited to their needs. We may lead other nations to follow us by example, but we may not compel them by force. All that Mr. Taft says of the Filipinos might have been said of the Japanese when Perry landed on their islands, of the Mexicans in 1848, of the Cubans two years ago. These nations framed their own government and have succeeded. There is no case in history where a nation has learned to govern itself by being governed against its will by a foreign nation, and I defy Mr. Taft to suggest one. Nations and men learn to use their powers by practice and their own mistakes are their best teachers.

It is clear, however, that the Secretary's policy is not intended to secure independence. He himself tells us that it will make the United States value more highly "its association with this pearl of the oriental tropics." The phrase is not altruistic, nor are nations prone to let go what they prize. His policy will plant more American capital in the islands, it will induce more and more Americans to go there, and after this process has gone on for a century, he thinks it will be soon enough to consider whether the Filipinos are fit to govern themselves and whether they shall be given independence. He does not expect them then to ask it, and this expectation at least is reasonable, for it may be doubted whether if his policy

prevails there will then be a Filipino people. The process of weakening them and crushing their aspirations will have been complete, and America, secure in their possession, will readily decide that they are not fit for independence and are too valuable to lose, just as England, after a much longer lapse of years, still clings to India and is extending her sway over nations now free rather than giving freedom to those who are now her subjects.

Secretary Taft's policy will not succeed, but if it does there will never be a Philippine Republic, and we shall be guilty of destroying an Eastern people as we have destroyed the natives of our own continent.

Secretary Taft told the Chamber of Commerce that "we have tranquillity in the islands." He is afraid that a promise of independence in the future would disturb it by raising unfounded hopes. "Order reigns in Warsaw." Does the Secretary suppose that a people which has done and which has suffered so much since 1898 to win its independence, which has been subdued at such frightful cost by war, by torture, by reconcentration, has ceased to desire independence? Is there in human history an example of such instant submission to an alien conqueror? How many of England's oppressive acts have Irishmen forgotten? Are the memories of our Civil War effaced? Is it possible that the Filipinos have forgotten their husbands, their fathers, their brothers, and their sons, whose graves are yet freshly green?

The Secretary deceives himself if he fancies that our silence will make them forget the cause which they have so much at heart. Even if they are "tranquil" now, how long will they remain so with the American resident population abusing them and the government denying them any hope of better things? Let them understand from us that their object is our object, that we will work with them for their independence, that they shall have what Cuba has, and they will be patient; but we cannot assure tranquillity by postponing the thought of independence for generations, and leaving it to be granted then by men whose capital will have been invested in these islands and who will have a hundred reasons for holding them where we have one.

"Generations" hence means never, and such postponement closes the door of hope to all men now living and their sons and grandsons. To suppose that because we do not say inde-

pendence, the Filipinos do not think of it, pray for it, and plot for it, is to imitate the ostrich and to deny the Filipinos the ordinary attributes of men. Secretary Taft would suppress the dearest aspirations of a whole people and expect them to submit without a murmur.

It is impossible in one paper to answer all that the Secretary has said. It is the purpose of this paper to point out that he really denies the American people any right to discuss the Philippine question, and insists that we must all submit to the views which are entertained by him. This is not popular government, and that it is suggested shows how readily tyranny abroad becomes absolutism at home. His policy is sustained by assumptions as to human nature which are at variance with all experience. They cannot bear discussion. His words are a silk glove for an iron hand, and they mean that the United States ought to govern the Philippine Islands as it likes and as long as it likes, making them daily more valuable to it and harder to part with, and that its power must be exercised by administrative officers, who will be uncontrolled by constitution or by public opinion, since the Filipinos without the ballot will have no voice that their rulers will respect, and the Americans will as now believe their own countrymen and let the government deal as it will with these unknown subjects. It is absolute government for 8,000,000 of men, now and forever, which Secretary Taft preaches.

Against it let us set the everlasting truths of the Declaration of Independence.

II.

Secretary Taft's careful statement of his Philippine policy at Cambridge was skilfully prepared and well calculated to allay distrust as to Philippine conditions. As it is always difficult, however, for contemporaries, who are subject to the passions and prejudices of the hour, to grasp the significance of passing events, I venture to ask the readers of this paper for a moment to occupy the historical standpoint and to consider briefly a few points which should be weighed in reply.

In the first place, Secretary Taft has been some years the virtual governor of the Philippine Islands. As such he has

adopted and carried into effect a certain policy, and the question is whether that policy has been wise. His statements of facts and conditions, his account of the people, his report of what has been done, come from a man who is speaking in his own defense, who is a possible candidate for high office in the future, and who, because he is a man, naturally presents his own side of the case. In this matter he is inevitably an advocate, not a judge. No Roman proconsul, no English ruler of India, no president, no mayor of a city, in describing his own administration, fails to present his own conduct in a favorable light. Lord Dalhousie, under whose rule the Indian mutiny broke out, regarded himself as a missionary of civilization. Only a little more than two years ago Secretary Root told the country that our war in the Philippines had been conducted "with scrupulous regard for the rules of civilized warfare, with careful and genuine consideration for the prisoner and the non-combatant, with self-restraint and with a humanity never surpassed."

To every question of administration there are two sides, the side of the governor and the side of the governed. Secretary Taft gives us one side; who can give us the other?

Government by the people is successful because the governors and the governed are the same, and as Mr. Taft himself well says, "It is certain that in the long run no one is likely to look after one's interest so well as the person whose interest is involved." The voters know many things which they could not prove, and act upon their knowledge. Power is selfish. If the people have it, they will look after themselves; if a party has it, the party looks after itself, and if a man has it, he looks after himself.

All that Secretary Taft says may be true. A large majority of his countrymen believe it, because he says it. Suppose it were largely false,—they would believe it just the same. They naturally believe what the American governor says about the Filipinos, however little they believe the assertions of their rulers at home, and they will never take the word of the Filipinos against him. It is because now and always they will believe only their own countrymen, that the American people, or any people, is unfit to govern another. It is because a man cannot be judge in his own case that, as Lincoln says "No man is good enough to govern another without that other's consent." It is one insurmountable objection to our policy in the Philip-

piners that the side of the Filipinos will never be understood by this country.

Let us now test Secretary Taft's statements in the light of history. Take, for example, this: "Not by our seeking, not by any greed of territory, but by circumstances over which we could exercise no control, we were forced into a relation with the Filipino people which imposed obligations on us we could not escape."

Will the historian believe this? Only when he believes that "duty" and uncontrollable circumstances forced Spain to conquer Peru and Mexico, Russia to seize Manchuria, or England to make war upon Thibet.

Let us take another illustration. Mr. Taft begins his catalogue of achievements in these words: "Well, what have we done? First, we have suppressed the insurrection."

How will history regard this statement? It will observe first, perhaps, that Mr. Taft says:

"We were in a sense allies of Aguinaldo and his followers, united for the purpose of driving Spain out of the Philippines. . . . To desert him as an ally, to restore to Spain Manila, which was the key of the islands, and thus to enable Spain to drive him back into the interior and finally disperse his forces, would have been violating an obligation which the circumstances of our joint action created, and would doubtless have subjected the islands to another and a bloody war."

History will observe next that until the treaty with Spain was ratified, which was after the battle of February 5, or, as the secretary says, "on April 11, 1899," "by exactly a two-thirds vote of the Senate," the United States had no title to a foot of land in the islands, no right to control a single Filipino, while by the protocol our forces were forbidden to occupy anything but the city and harbor of Manila.

History will read in the official report of Gen. Otis, that on February 4 our forces opened fire on a Filipino patrol and killed two men; that there followed "an exchange of fire between opposing lines for a distance of about two miles," and that at daybreak Gen. Otis attacked the Filipinos and a battle followed which lasted till 5 P. M., of which Otis says: "The engagement was one strictly defensive on the part of the insurgents and of vigorous attack by our forces;" that "it is not

believed that the chief insurgents wished to open hostilities at this time;" that the next day the Filipinos asked for an armistice and a chance to negotiate; that this request was refused, and that the war thus begun was prosecuted with the result that Aguinaldo was driven "back into the interior," his forces were finally dispersed, and the islands were subjected "to another and a bloody war."

Will not history ask how the Filipinos in their native land can be called "insurgents" against the United States, when the latter had acquired no right or title of any kind to their allegiance and it was very doubtful whether the Senate would ratify the treaty, or, as their contemporaneous action shows, undertake to exercise sovereignty over the islands, if they did ratify it?

Will it not ask whether the Filipinos were guilty of insurrection, because they tried to defend themselves against a "vigorous attack" by the American forces, who, in making it, violated the protocol, or how they can be charged with responsibility for a contest which it is admitted they did not desire, and which they vainly tried to stay at the first opportunity? The fable of the wolf and the lamb furnishes a striking precedent.

Will not history put the far more searching question: "If your obligations to your allies forbade your allowing Spain to attack them, disperse their forces and subject the islands 'to another and a bloody war,' did not these obligations prevent your doing these very things yourselves?"

How will Secretary Taft answer this question at a bar, where facts and not vague assertions alone will weigh? Can he explain how the United States could do with honor what we could not have allowed Spain to do without infamy?

Let us take another position of the secretary. He says that though "Aguinaldo had elements of leadership, in that he summoned about him, when authority grew in his hands, the able and educated of his people to aid him," we could not have abandoned the islands to their charge because his government was "that of the military dictator," the admirable constitution "never was put in force, its guaranties were never enjoyed by the people, the result of the government was oppressive, arbitrary action and disturbance greater than ever occurred in the time of Spain."

Until President McKinley issued his proclamation of

“benevolent assimilation,” nay, till after the fighting had actually begun, there is no evidence that Aguinaldo’s government did not command the confidence of his people or seemed to them oppressive. From necessity Aguinaldo, while forming his government, exercised arbitrary power, as did Bolivar; from necessity also, while his unhappy country was struggling for national existence against our army, constitutional guaranties were ignored as they were during our Civil war. But these things were the consequences, not the causes, of our action, and no one can read President McKinley’s proclamation of December, 1898, and compare it with Secretary Taft’s speech, and not anticipate the verdict of history on the secretary’s argument.

Nay, if it is true that Aguinaldo’s constitution was never put in force and his government is therefor to be condemned as arbitrary, what shall we say of our own government, which is also uncontrolled by any constitution? Does this argument cut only one way?

But with what grace can we plead that Aguinaldo’s government rests upon a cornerstone of “violence and bloodshed,” or say that conflicting factions might have caused anarchy? What worse results could have come to the unhappy Filipinos from struggles among themselves (which we guess would have occurred—just as we falsely guessed that they would occur at once among the Cubans) than have followed our benevolent course? We now know that our policy there has resulted in a loss of life and a destruction of property, in a burning of towns and a devastation of fields, which the Filipinos, with their imperfect means of destruction and with their interest in their own property, could never have inflicted upon themselves. We know that we conquered them by fire and sword, by cruel and persistent torture, by wholesale reconcentration, by such measures as were ordered by Gen. Smith and by Gen. Bell, and we know to our shame what a dark and bloody chapter of history was written by our armies in the Philippines to our lasting dishonor. As we did to our allies what we could not let the Spaniards do, so to save the Filipinos from shedding each other’s blood, we have shed far larger quantities ourselves.

Secretary Taft was in the islands and in high authority while these things were done. He was there charged with a duty thus defined by President McKinley in words which he quotes: “A high and sacred obligation rests upon the government of the

United States to give protection for property and life, civil and religious freedom and wise and unselfish guidance in the paths of peace and prosperity to all the people of the Philippine Islands. I charge this commission to labor for the full performance of this obligation."

No action or protest of Secretary Taft against torture and cruelty has been made public. When he testified before the Senate committee he certainly did not tell them what crimes had been committed in our name, but his testimony, so far as it went, tended to disguise the facts. In this sad chapter of conquest he now finds nothing to regret, since he points with pride to the fact that "we have suppressed the insurrection," as the first of our glorious achievements in the Philippine Islands.

The general character of Secretary Taft's statements about the people of the Philippines, their defects, and our good deeds, may probably be judged from the assertions, which we are able to compare with facts that we know. If we cannot compare the others, it is because we have no such method of ascertaining the facts from the Filipino side. They are the plaintiffs, unrepresented by counsel. Mr. Taft's speech is inevitably the argument for the defense.

Let me ask another question: Suppose there were factions, and even contests among the Filipinos? Have not such contests characterized the progress of every nation toward freedom? The wars of the Roses, the rebellion against the Stuarts under Cromwell and the Revolution in England, the many contests in France and its bloody revolution, the bitter feuds between rival Italian cities, may easily be recalled. It would be as difficult for Mr. Taft to name the country now independent, in which struggles have not occurred, as it is to name one which has learned to govern itself through being governed by a foreign conqueror.

Let me state briefly another point. Secretary Taft's position rests upon the assumption that the Filipinos are unfit to govern themselves. He, an enlightened American, claims that the people of the United States are a superior race, entirely competent to govern wisely this inferior people. What he believes will be believed just as firmly by a large majority of his countrymen, and their feeling will surely be entertained by those who go from America either to govern the Filipinos or to make money in the islands.

He argues that independence should not be promised be-

cause "the presence of the United States in the islands is necessary to maintain order and sustain a well-ordered government, to secure civil rights to the people, and to aliens with vested interests," and he dwells upon the necessity of "constant watchfulness to protect against abuses by the populace, and a strong party spread all over the islands."

He desires to induce Americans to settle in the islands and and to invest their capital there.

He suggests that at some time in the future it will be a question whether the Filipinos are fit for independence, and that the American people shall then decide that question.

Is it not clear that whenever this question is raised the Americans who have made the Philippines their home, who have invested money there, and who regard the Filipinos as inferior, will use exactly the same arguments that Mr. Taft now uses against the surrender of the islands? Will not they protest, and with great force, against being turned over to the government of an inferior race? Will they not dwell upon their "vested interests"? Will they not raise every bugbear that the Secretary raises now? If not, they will be unlike every other people in history, and unlike themselves as we know them now.

If the resident Americans are given a voice in the government of the islands, and it is impossible to believe that American citizens will long be denied a voice in the government of a territory under our sway, where they have made their homes, we shall have in these islands, as we have in the South now, a self-styled superior race and an inferior race in contact. The Americans now in Manila are strongly "anti-Filipino," as Mr. Taft himself tells us. They call the natives "niggers," and think of them as such. They will never willingly surrender power to them.

Is it not clear that we are establishing in the Philippines the exact race problem that exists at home, which has been and is a prolific seed of woe, which has proved too difficult for our people to solve, and which is full of evil possibilities?

Perhaps this idea was in Mr. Taft's mind on February 20, 1902, when Senator Culberson asked him to tell the Senate committee the grounds of his objection to the acquisition of the islands, and he replied: "Because I am not an expansionist and I would much prefer that we should proceed in the United States to make the government better here than to go to distant possessions. I said so at the time I was appointed, and I have

not changed my mind in that respect."

He justifies our remaining on the ground that we must govern "the Philippines for the Filipinos." He says that their interests require our care. The Filipinos, after a full experience of our benevolence, do not share his opinion, and if he is considering only their interests, their opinion is entitled to control. Is it not monumental assumption for any man to suppose that he or his people can govern a foreign nation better than they can govern themselves?

But when we read Secretary Taft's speeches through, we find that his wish is to make these islands a permanent possession. He believes that the United States will learn to value "this pearl of the oriental tropics." He hopes to bring them within our tariff wall, and thereby to help ourselves.

Stripped of its sugar covering, the Secretary's policy is to keep the islands without political liberty for generations, to plant there American citizens and American capital, to Americanize them and make them profitable, and thus to cement the tie so that it cannot be broken. This is to say, "The Philippines for the Filipinos," but to mean, "The Philippines for the Americans,"—with as much liberty to the Filipinos thrown in as is not inconsistent with American interests.

However Secretary Taft may phrase it, the end and object of his policy is a permanent colonial system, maintained by the absolute power of the United States, until the Filipinos become contented subjects. It means their independence never.

He says that those who desire Philippine independence ask the United States "to turn the government (of the Philippines) over to a small minority made up of a cabal of violent military men, maintaining their power by an army and terrorism and assassination." Waiving the question how our own power has been established and maintained, and saying nothing of Samar, I would emphatically deny that any such request is made by any opponent of Mr. Taft.

We ask that the people of the Philippines be given the opportunity to form a government for themselves, to frame their own constitution, and to choose their own rulers. We point to the course adopted in Cuba as a precedent, though we wish no Platt amendment. We would have this country by agreement with foreign powers secure the independence of the new state as the independence of Switzerland and Belgium is secured. A nation which boasts that it has compelled "the

open door" in China can at least do this. We would remind our fellow-countrymen of the gloomy prophecies which preceded the establishment of the Cuban republic, now falsified. We would recall the examples of Mexico and Japan, which have risen to power by our assistance, but not under our sway. We would see the Philippines another Cuba, and so on this anniversary, when we celebrate the Declaration of Independence, we shall be enabled again with heads erect to uphold it in all its original significance instead of trying to explain it away and limit its application, as Senator Douglas did in defense of domestic slavery and as Secretary Taft did in defense of "criminal aggression" in his speech on Tuesday last.

The policy of the administration in the Philippine Islands is wrong,—morally, economically, politically wrong, and from wrong nothing but evil can come. "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just," said Jefferson, but his countrymen went on cheerfully claiming that they as the superior race had a right to own and use as they would their inferiors, the negroes, and that slavery was a benevolent institution, promoting the real welfare of the slave, while incidentally profiting the master.

The argument of the slave owner then is the argument of Secretary Taft now, and it prevailed "until every drop of blood drawn by the lash" was "paid by another drawn by the sword," and Jefferson's fears were realized in the Civil War, with its long train of evil consequences. The American of today will do well to lay this lesson of history to heart, and to remember that God is still just, lest another generation may reap a yet more bitter harvest from the seed of evil which Secretary Taft and his associates have sown.

July 4, 1904.

Appendix A. In his speech at Cambridge on June 28th, Secretary Taft treated this paragraph as "a general charge that facts coming from the islands are suppressed," and said, "This is wholly untrue." Touching the report of Col. Gardener, he said:

"And now the charge of suppression is renewed with reference to the so-called Gardener report as to conditions of

the conduct of the war in Tayabas, Batangas and Laguna. A board of officers was convened with a Recorder. Col. Gardener was furnished counsel by the civil government. The Board filed a report which I have never seen because it was filed while I was on my way to the islands, but I understand from Col. Gardener himself that it resulted in a finding of not proven. He maintained that his report was confidential, that he had not intended it for publication, and that rather than call military officers as witnesses to conversations he had had with them, he would withdraw the charges founded on such statements. I believe that generally his native witnesses failed him from timidity or other cause; though he justified himself by a number of ex parte affidavits which he did not use in court as he could not, but merely kept to show in case of an attack on him that he had not acted without warrant. On such a finding, of course, there was no ground for action by the War Department."

This statement, when we examine it, admits that the truth was suppressed. Col. Gardener was the governor of a province and made a report which reflected severely upon the conduct of United States officers and disclosed deplorable conditions in certain districts. Secretary Taft does not suggest that it was not true, but says first that it was "confidential" and "not intended for publication." That is, this disagreeable truth was to be kept secret and not disclosed to the American public, while apparently the other reports were intended for publication.

Admitting that this was a confidential communication, intended by an officer of repute to inform his superiors, the Philippine Commission, of abuses which required correction and punishment, how was it treated? Was any attempt made to punish the offenders? Did the Commission proceed against them and use the evidence which Col. Gardener had? On the contrary, he was made the defendant. Was any attempt made to discover the truth? On the contrary, Gardener was allowed to withdraw charges rather than call witnesses. Affidavits could not be used, but the men who made them might have been called and were not. The native witnesses, who had failed "from timidity" might have been reassured. Had the purpose been to suppress the truth, what better method could have been

devised than to make the accuser the defendant and to give him as a tribunal a court of army officers whose comrades in arms had been accused;—in a word, to make him feel that he had done wrong to speak the truth, and to let him withdraw his accusations as the easiest way out of the trouble for all parties? The proceedings of the court and its report if published would show how the work was done. One cannot but marvel why Secretary Taft considers that a charge of suppressing the truth is met by such a statement as he made.

I should add that, on consulting the record, I do not find that the report of this court was specifically called for in the Senate Resolution.

Appendix B. To this paragraph Secretary Taft, at Cambridge, made the following reply:

“The charge that the Superintendent of Education warned his teachers not to write letters home for the purpose of suppressing the truth in this country is ludicrously incorrect. It was not to prevent their reaching here. It was to prevent their return to the islands. The fact was that in numbers of cases, school teachers would write home, holding up to ridicule the Filipino people, their civilization, their morality, or their religion. Their letters would be published in this country. If they criticized the religion of the Filipinos as they sometimes did, their letters would be rightly condemned by their co-religionists in this country as improper expressions from teachers of Catholic youth, and their removal would be demanded. The school question is a delicate question with the Catholics at any rate, and as we have many Protestant teachers, we have a right to insist that they shall not destroy their usefulness by publications tending to show a partisan religious bias.

“If they, on the other hand, held the Filipinos up to ridicule, the articles would be copied in the American papers in Manila and translated into Spanish and the Filipino dialects and would quickly reach the neighborhood where the writer of the letter lived and would utterly destroy his usefulness in that neighborhood by rendering him unpopular and destroying the confidence of the natives in him. It was attempted by the writers to avoid responsibility for such letters by the statement that they were con-

fidential and were not intended for publication, but the evil had been done. The admonitions of Superintendent Bryan had the motive I have explained and had not the slightest purpose to keep the truth from the American people."

It may be said in passing that the fact "that in numbers of cases" teachers wrote home "holding up to ridicule the Filipino people, their civilization, their morality or their religion" throws a flood of light upon the character of the teachers. No one who holds his pupils in contempt can ever be useful as a teacher.

But the language of Mr. Bryan's circular is the best answer to the Secretary. As recorded in the "Report of the Philippine Commission," vol. I, pp. 264, 265, Mr. Bryan reports to the Commission:

"I am sending to all division superintendents and teachers a circular which contains the following paragraphs:"

The first paragraph calls their attention to the rule that "teachers shall not teach or criticise the doctrines of any church, religious sect or denomination," and bids them observe it on pain of dismissal.

The second paragraph is as follows:

"II. Because of your great distance from the States, and the prevailing conditions here being so different from the conditions there, it is very difficult for home people to correctly understand many things that we may be disposed to say to them in letters. They get a wrong impression, talk matters over freely, and frequently allow letters to be published, thus multiplying the wrong impression many times. Recently I have had my attention called to two cases of this kind, which have resulted in great embarrassment to the authors of the letters and considerable annoyance to the civil commission and this office. Teachers are requested to exercise such care as the situation demands, both in their statements and by special direction to correspondents, that all private communications shall be treated as such. Any misuse of matter sent to the States will be treated as if authorized by the party sending it."

The first proposition which is there laid down is that "it is very difficult for home people to correctly understand many things that we may be disposed to say to them in letters." The

publication complained of is the publication in the United States, "thus multiplying the wrong impression many times." It will be observed that the paragraph nowhere suggests any trouble arising from publication in the Philippines, and yet if the object of the circular was to prevent this, it is difficult to account for the omission of any reference to this main object.

No one can read this circular and not see that it was the impression which letters would make on the people at home, and not on the Filipinos, that was present to Mr. Bryan's mind when he penned his circular and that he wished to prevent. The statement which Secretary Taft calls "ludicrously incorrect" is abundantly justified.

The issue of a second edition gives an opportunity to add a word of comment upon the recent developments in Philippine affairs. The last Congress refused to relieve the Filipinos from the distress caused by the tariff relations with the United States, and the only consideration shown to them was the establishment of an agricultural bank which was suggested several years ago by Aguinaldo and which only passed Congress by a kind of happy accident. The Philippine Assembly, which is about to be called, can do nothing without the consent of the Philippine Commission, which is the upper house. The electorate thereto is so limited that only males of twenty-three years of age, owning 500 pesos' worth of land, or able to speak English and Spanish, or who are ex-officials of the Spanish regime, can vote,—an insignificant percentage,—and the body will have value only as it represents Filipino opinion. The promotion of the railway system, with the guaranteed interest upon foreign investments, is likely to prove a heavy burden upon Philippine finances, while the execution of the plan is loudly complained of in the islands as involving fraud and injustice to the landholders whose property is condemned. The tremendous menace of the present situation to the United States, in case of war, has been brought home to the people, and it has been made obvious that either enormous expenses must be incurred for additional naval forces and for fortifications, or the possessions can readily be seized by any enemy of the United States. The plan of neutralization, which occupies the minds of publicists now throughout the world, which has been urged by Norway for

itself, which has been discussed in Holland, and which has been suggested in Santo Domingo as a thing to be urged by its delegate to the Hague in order to assure its existing independence, has been proposed as a means of ridding ourselves of the responsibilities supposed to be assumed in the Philippines, and a majority of the American people would probably now be glad if some way to Philippine independence could be devised. With such a will, the way will be found!

